

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™

Compelling Question	How did Asian Americans challenge separate and unequal education in the pre-Brown era?
Standards and Practices	D2. His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts. D2. His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past. D2. His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts. D2. His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.
Staging the Question	Ask students, “Which historical figures, groups, or events come to your mind when you hear the word school segregation?” Draw a concept map of school segregation on the board based on what students share. Engage students in conversation on where Asian Americans might fit into the concept map and which school Asian American students might have gone to in the pre-Brown era and why. Also encourage students to think about why it is important to include Asian American experiences into a study of school (de)segregation history in the US.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
How did Mamie Tape’s family challenge school exclusion of Chinese American students in the late 1800s in California?	How did Keikichi Aoki’s family challenge school segregation of Japanese American students in the early 1900s in California?	How did Martha Lum’s family challenge school segregation of Chinese American students in the early 1900s in Mississippi?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Write one to two paragraphs that answer supporting question 1 using evidence from the sources.	Write one to two paragraphs that answer supporting question 2 using evidence from the sources.	Write one to two paragraphs that answer supporting question 3 using evidence from the sources.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p>Source A: Tape family picture, Ms. Tape’s protest letter, California school laws in 1880 https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2021/05/before-brown-v-education-there-was-tape-v-hurley/</p> <p>Source B: Tape v. Hurley court decision https://web.archive.org/web/20160625050111/http://www.asianamericanleagal.com/index.php/9-historical-cases/23-tape-v-hurley</p> <p>Source C: News clippings on Tape v. Hurley case https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=DAC18850305.2.21&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1</p>	<p>Source A: Aoki v. Deane Respondent’s brief https://archive.org/details/hejapaneseschool00burk/mode/2up</p> <p>Source B: Theodore Roosevelt’s Annual message to Congress https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/state-of-the-union-address-part-ii-11/</p> <p>Source C: Photos, newspaper clipping, cartoons about Aoki v. Deane https://cal170.library.ca.gov/japanese-segregation/</p>	<p>Source A: Lum v. Rice of 1927 decision https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep275078/</p> <p>Source B: Rice v. Lum of 1925 decision https://cite.case.law/miss/139/760/</p> <p>Source C: Photographs of segregated Chinese school and Chinese American students in Mississippi https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/mississippi-chinese-an-ethnic-people-in-a-biracial-society</p> <p>Source D: Oral history interviews of Chinese Americans about schooling in Jim Crow South http://da.mdah.ms.gov/vault/projects/OHtranscripts/AU411_099288.pdf</p>

Summative Performance Task	Argument	Construct an argument through an essay, poster, slideshow, song lyric, or other form that discusses the compelling question using specific claims and relevant evidence from historical sources while acknowledging competing views.
	Extension	<p>Develop a diagram or other visualization of how Asian American experiences of separate and unequal education were shaped by international, national, regional contexts. Use the background essay (attached) to provide students with information to understand the various contextual factors.</p> <p>Discuss contention and complexity in the three cases with focus on Asian American complicity in the white supremacy and anti-Black racism by not challenging the separate but equal doctrine/practice.</p>
Taking Informed Action	<p>UNDERSTAND Research Korean, Filipino, South Asian, or other Asian American groups' schooling experiences in the pre-Brown era.</p> <p>ASSESS Create a digital presentation on the chosen group's educational experiences and its similarity and difference with Japanese and Chinese American students' experiences. Share it with the whole class and ask for feedback and revisions.</p> <p>ACT Share the digital presentation with the larger audience such as elementary students or via social media for public awareness.</p>	

Background Essay: Tape v. Hurley (1885)

Although initially welcomed as a cheap labor source during the California Gold Rush in the 1840s and the transcontinental railroad construction of the 1860s, the Chinese were soon viewed as a “yellow peril,” a threatening group of people who stole jobs from whites. Perceived as dangerous foreigners, Chinese migrants were discriminated and excluded from naturalization, land ownership, voting, employment, and interracial marriage. Anti-Chinese lynching and mob violence were not uncommon in 1870s. The U.S. government further closed its door to the Chinese labor migration through the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

In this sociopolitical context, Chinese American children’s requests for equal education were consistently denied by white lawmakers. The earliest California school laws did not mention race, but by 1864, California law explicitly stated that “Negroes, Mongolians, and Indians” could attend school but only a “separate school” and only if the parents of 10 or more children applied. In 1870, California responded to the growing anti-Chinese movement by removing the term “Mongolian” from its school law and excluding Chinese American students from public education. In 1880, however, California had to amend its school law because the state Supreme Court concluded that race could not prevent young people from attending school in *Ward v. Flood* (1874) decision. The amended school law of 1880 now read, “Every school, unless otherwise provided by law, must be open for the admission of all children between six and twenty-one years of age residing in the district.”

Mamie Tape’s story unfolded against this backdrop. Mamie’s parents, Joseph and Mary Tape, immigrated from China and had a successful business in California. In 1884, they tried to enroll their 8-year-old U.S.-born daughter Mamie in Spring Valley Primary School, an all-white school in their neighborhood. The school principal Jennie Hurley refused to admit Mamie because of her Chinese descent. The state school law at that time guaranteed “all children” admission to public schools. Yet the city of San Francisco had been excluding Chinese American children from public schools for more than a decade. Mamie’s parents found the exclusion unfair and sued the San Francisco Board of Education. The Superior Court ruled in favor of the Tape family. On appeal, the state Supreme Court upheld the lower court verdict in *Tape v. Hurley* of 1885.

Dissatisfied with the ruling, the superintendent of San Francisco, Andrew Moulder, lobbied the state legislature to amend the state school law by adding the line: “trustees shall have the power... to establish separate schools for children of Mongolian or Chinese descent. When such separate schools are established Chinese or Mongolian children must not be admitted into any other schools.” Mamie’s mother protested by writing an open letter to a local newspaper:

Mamie Tape will never attend any of the Chinese schools of your making! Never!!! I will let the world see Sir what justice there is when it is governed by the race of prejudiced men! Just because she is of the Chinese descent, not because she doesn’t dress like you because she does. Just because she is descended of Chinese parents. I guess she is more of an American than a good many of you that is going to prevent her being educated.

Regardless, the school board quickly opened a Chinese primary school in San Francisco and ordered Mamie and other Chinese American children to attend the school. The white supremacy and institutional racism against which Mamie’s family and other Chinese immigrants fought was well reflected in the words of the superintendent Mr. Moulder:

The duty, which the teachers owe to the children committed to their charge should prompt them to active efforts to save the rising generation from contamination and pollution by a race reeking with the vices of the Orient, a race that knows neither truth, principle, modesty nor respect for our laws. The moral and physical ruin already wrought to our youth by contact with these people is fearful. Let us exhaust all peaceful methods to stop its spread.

Background Essay: Aoki v. Deane (1907)

Compared to the Chinese, the numbers of Japanese immigrants were low until the first decade of the 20th century. Hence, Japanese American children were permitted to attend white schools as long as white residents did not object. By 1910, however, the number of Japanese migrants reached about 72,000 as they became a new source of cheap Asian labor aftermath of 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Paralleling the population growth, anti-Japanese movement intensified. The 1901 campaign platform of San Francisco Mayor Eugene Schmitz, for example, included educating “all Asiatics, both Chinese and Japanese” in segregated schools. In 1905, the *San Francisco Chronicle* began anti-Japanese campaign with a series of articles demonizing the Japanese, and labor unions formed the Japanese and Korean Exclusion League.

Responding to anti-Japanese movement, the San Francisco Board of Education changed the name of segregated Chinese school in the city from the “Chinese Primary School” to the “Oriental Public School” in 1906 and ordered Japanese American students, who had been attending white schools, to go to the segregated Oriental school. Japanese immigrant community protested, keeping their children at home. They also appealed to Japanese government and media about their mistreatment. A leading Tokyo Newspaper responded, for example, by calling for all Japanese to “stand up. Our countrymen have been humiliated on the other side of the Pacific. Our boys and girls have been expelled from the public schools by the rascals of the United States, cruel and merciless like demons.” Japanese government, a rising world power at the turn of 20th century, officially protested.

To maintain a good relationship with Japan, U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt intervened. The president stated, “to shut them [Japanese American students] out from the public schools is a wicked absurdity” in his State of the Union Address and ordered the U.S. Attorney General to take court action against the San Francisco Board of Education. On the morning of January 17, 1907, a 10-year-old Japanese immigrant student, Keikichi Aoki, was accompanied by representatives of the US Attorney’s office and went to San Francisco’s Redding School to request admission to the school. Principal Deane refused. After this prearranged confrontation, the Attorney General filed his brief in both Federal District Court and the State Supreme Court through *Aoki v. Deane* of 1907.

In the meantime, President Roosevelt met with San Francisco school officials and California legislative leaders to work out a negotiation. The result was that the president would make the Gentlemen’s Agreement with Japan, by which Japan would end Japanese laborer migration to the United States, and in exchange, the San Francisco Board of Education would rescind its segregation order. With this settlement, the *Aoki v. Deane* was dropped, not decided. Keikichi Aoki and other Japanese American students in San Francisco were able to return to white schools. By the 1920s, most of the 30,000 Japanese American students in California attended white public schools.

To note, unlike the *Tape* case, the *Aoki v. Deane* was settled out of court via political means, which was partly due to international politics. Whereas China held little political clout on the world stage at the turn of 20th century, Japan was a rising international power who had just defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1885 and Russia in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. In this international context, the U.S. federal government intervened on behalf of the Japanese Americans and forced the local school board to relent its segregation order, whereas the government took no action in the case of Chinese American students. This shows not only domestic but also international contexts shape Asian American lives and anti-Asian racism.

Background Essay: Lum v. Rice (1927)

California was not the only place in which early Chinese Americans faced educational discrimination. After the Civil War, dominant whites in the South sought to undermine the changing power shift between freed African Americans and whites by encouraging non-Black migration.³⁴ In this context, some Chinese migrants began to move to the South, and soon a question arose: Where should Chinese American children go to school in the bifurcated world of Jim Crow?

In the case of Mississippi, the state constitution stated that separate schools were to be provided for the “White” and “colored” races. Conventionally the “colored” meant Black in the Jim Crow South.³⁶ Navigating the binary racial world, Chinese immigrants taught their children at home or sent them to China for education. Some could enroll their children at a white school when they were only one or two Chinese families living in the district and white residents did not see them as a threat.

Marth Lum’s story unfolded against this backdrop. Marth’s parents, Katherine and Jeu Gong Lum, migrated from China and settled in Rosedale, Mississippi, running a grocery there. In the 1923-24 school year, then 8-year-old Martha and her sister Berda could attend the all-white Rosedale public school in their neighborhood. Then, on the first day the next school year, they were summoned to the principal’s office and told that they were no longer welcome at the school because they were not white.

Martha’s parents filed suit in local court, arguing their daughters were not “colored” and, as U.S.-born citizen, their daughters had right to attend a public school. The Bolivar County Judge ruled in favor of the Martha’s family. The school district’s board trustees appealed to the state Supreme Court, which reversed the previous decision in *Rice v. Lum* (1925):

We think that the constitutional convention used the word “colored” in the broad sense rather than the restricted sense; its purpose being to provide schools for the white or Caucasian race, to which schools no other race could be admitted, carrying out the broad dominant purpose of preserving the purity and integrity of the white race and its social policy.

Martha’s family appealed, and the case went to the US Supreme Court. In November 1927, the court issued unanimous ruling in confirmation of the state Supreme Court. Citing *Plessy v. Ferguson* and other state cases adjudicating the issue of “separate but equal” education, the court held that the states maintained the authority to establish “separate but equal” schools without violating the Fourteenth Amendment:

A child of Chinese blood, born in, and a citizen of the United States, is not denied the equal protection of the laws by being classed by the State among the colored races who are assigned to public school separate from those provided for the whites, when equal facilities for education are afforded to both classes.

Frustrated with the court decision, Martha’s family moved to Arkansas and settled in a town where Martha and her siblings could attend a white school. In the late 1930s Mississippi formally established segregated schools for Chinese students. To note, although Martha’s parents sought to provide their daughters with access to a quality education, their lawsuit did not challenge the constitutionality of segregated education. Instead, it challenged their daughter’s classification as “colored,” which was unsuccessful and thus affirmed the application of the “separate but equal” doctrine to Chinese Americans.

Source guidance

	Sources	Direction
SQ 1	Source A: Tape family picture, Ms. Tape’s protest letter, California school laws in 1880 https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2021/05/before-brown-v-education-there-was-tape-v-hurley/	This resource includes several primary and secondary sources. They are not too long and relevant for middle and high school students. No modification is necessary.
	Source B: Tape v. Hurley court decision https://web.archive.org/web/20160625050111/http://www.asianamericanlegal.com/index.php/9-historical-cases/23-tape-v-hurley	Have students read the first 6 sections in the court decision.
	Source C: News clippings on Tape v. Hurley case https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=DAC18850305.2.21&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1	No modification is necessary.
SQ 2	Source A: Aoki v. Deane Respondent’s brief https://archive.org/details/hejapaneseschool00burk/mode/2up	Have students read the cover page, and pages 1-3.
	Source B: Theodore Roosevelt’s Annual message to Congress https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/state-of-the-union-address-part-ii-11/	Have students read 22nd paragraph
	Source C: Photos, newspaper clipping, cartoons about Aoki v. Deane https://cal170.library.ca.gov/japanese-segregation/	This webpage has many primary sources and secondary sources for the case. Have students invest time to explore various sources and understand the case.
SQ 3	Source A: Lum v. Rice of 1927 decision https://www.loc.gov/item/usrep275078/	Have students read the last paragraph of page 85 and second paragraph of page 87.
	Source B: Rice v. Lum of 1925 decision https://cite.case.law/miss/139/760/	Have students read sections 787, 788.
	Source C: Photographs of segregated Chinese school and Chinese American students in Mississippi https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/mississippi-chinese-an-ethnic-people-in-a-biracial-society	Have students read the content and analyze photos in the webpage.
	Source D: Oral history interviews of Chinese Americans about schooling in Jim Crow South http://da.mdah.ms.gov/vault/projects/OHtranscripts/AU411_099288.pdf	Have students read the oral interview script.